1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA Alexandria Division -----: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : Case No. 1:09-cr-179 -vs-MIRWAIS MOHAMADI, Defendant. : ----: HEARING ON MOTIONS January 5, 2010 Before: Liam O'Grady, Judge APPEARANCES: Ronald L. Walutes, Jr., Counsel for the United States Frank Salvato, Counsel for the Defendant

The Defendant, M. Mohamadi, in person

regard to the bond conditions.

Norman B. Linnell OCR-USDC/EDVA (703)549-4626

I can tell the Court, I have given great effort to try to resolve this particular situation over the past couple weeks.

THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Mr. Salvato.

Mr. Mohamadi, come up to the lectern, sir, if you would like to address the Court.

I have received your December 14 letter and reviewed it. And I will make it part of the record.

So, I understand some of your frustrations, but I don't understand why they are directed towards Mr. Salvato because he is, one, a very respected member of our Bar.

Number two, he has worked, as I have heard him-Please have a seat, Mr. Salvato -- in hearings to make sure
that your rights were protected and in filing the many motions
that have been filed on your behalf and arguing them. He has
gotten discovery from the Government, and I am sure looked at
that closely.

And it appears to me that you are sitting in almost solitary confinement, and you are, as reasonably anyone would, thinking nonstop about the case. And as a result, you are tremendously frustrated. That's not Mr. Salvato's problem, it's your problem up to today's date because your conditions of confinement are a result of the allegations. And probable cause has been established and you have been indicted on attempting to harm potential witnesses and/or obstruct

```
4
 1
     witnesses' testimony. And as a result of those charges, the
 2
     conditions are what the conditions are. We will address that
 3
     further in a moment.
 4
               So, what's your position now on counsel?
 5
               THE DEFENDANT: First of all, good morning, Your
 6
    Honor.
            Happy New Year.
 7
               My issue is not-- I don't know, am I speaking too
 8
     loud?
 9
               THE COURT: No, that's fine.
               MR. SALVATO: My issue is not personally with Mr.
10
11
     Salvato. I think he is a great attorney, 20-year veteran in
12
     the federal courts. I am not questioning his ability as an
13
     attorney.
14
               My issue basically stems from the conditions. And
15
     it's not the mere fact that I'm frustrated, it's just the fact
16
     that I am very hindered in my communication with Mr. Salvato.
17
     When we speak, there is a security officer in the room while I
18
     am talking to Mr. Salvato, and those calls are very limited.
19
     They pull me out once on Monday, Friday-- Monday, Wednesday
20
     and Friday. And those are, those aren't guaranteed either.
21
               And when those calls happen, I just get one chance.
22
     If I get through or I don't get through, that's it for the
23
     day. And I have gone maybe two weeks, three weeks at a time
24
     without getting an opportunity to call Mr. Salvato.
25
               And I have kept all that highlighted in grievances
```

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

- 5 that I filed continuously. And I have even got grievances where the Major has responded and stated that Mr. Salvato does not want to speak to me, which I don't believe is the case. And I have all that in writing. And I just don't feel like I am given the opportunity. I am facing a ten-count indictment which, you know, which can result in a life sentence. And I just feel like I should be given the ability to defend myself. And without me being able to converse with Mr. Salvato properly-- I mean, he has to make a five-hour drive just to come see me. And Mr. Walutes does have a legitimate argument claiming that I, you know, accusing me of trying to harm witnesses, but these are unfounded allegations that I should have an opportunity to defend against. If I am being punished before I even get an opportunity, I don't understand how that is due process. THE COURT: Well, it's not just charges alleged by the Government, but a grand jury heard testimony from one or more witnesses who were under oath, and they determined there was probable cause to believe that you had committed those offenses. And that's why you were indicted. And I understand that.
- 24 THE DEFENDANT: But I-- I am sorry.
- 25 THE COURT: And you have a right to defend yourself,

```
6
 1
    but that's going to be at trial, which is coming up, what,
 2
     February 16?
 3
               THE DEFENDANT: But I also have the right to prepare
 4
     and, you know--
 5
               THE COURT: I understand. But your attorney can
 6
    prepare without consulting with you on a regular basis. He is
 7
     getting the Government's evidence and--
 8
               THE DEFENDANT: Without consulting me, I don't
 9
     understand how he can get the view of the circumstances if he
10
     just views what the Government's saying.
11
               THE COURT: Why don't we do this. You were sent
12
    back to the Northern Neck because of population issues--
13
               THE DEFENDANT: I feel like those issues that they
14
     claim are not valid because just prior to me being there, they
15
    held a terrorist that was accused of killing thousands of
16
    people, and they had appropriate accommodations for him. And
     I don't understand how I am such a severe case where I can't
17
18
     be held in that facility.
19
               And I am very aware of other facilities in that area
20
     that are very secure and have very competent staff that they
21
     would be able to house me. I feel like all of this is just a
22
    measure from the prosecution, I am not accusing the
23
    prosecution of anything because I respect the fact that he is
24
     doing his job, but I am just saying that all these stuff are
25
     actually, in my eyes are viewed as a way of hindering me from
```

preparing a defense.

I am moved away from my attorney, I am not able to communicate with my family who are a source of my resources. How am I supposed to obtain experts--

THE COURT: Why isn't that resolved by, at least in part by moving you back to Alexandria or one of the other jails in Northern Virginia by towards the end of January? So, you have three or more weeks to prepare.

And I am willing to do that, to bring you back and order the Marshals Service to bring you back sometime towards the end of January to make sure that you have an opportunity to meet individually with, face-to-face with your counsel.

So, I think we can cure part of the problem by doing that. And I am willing to do that. I do not want you so anxious by lack of preparation that you are not able to listen to what's going on in a trial. And I think that is the solution for that.

And I think that's, really the ability to communicate has been the issue.

THE DEFENDANT: But due to that inability to communicate, I have a lot of pretrial motions that I want to address that haven't been addressed. And the fact that a lot of the motions that I wanted to, you know, preserve in case I do have to appeal, which is very likely with the amount of cases that I am facing, I would like to preserve a lot of

```
Case 1:09-cr-00179-LO Document 71 Filed 01/22/10 Page 8 of 23 PageID# 525
 1
     situations, which I haven't been given the opportunity to do
 2
     because of my lack of communication.
 3
               THE COURT: Well, you can't write that down and put
 4
     it in a letter to Mr. Salvato?
 5
               THE DEFENDANT: I have wrote-- My letters aren't
 6
     getting to him. There is a log of letters that went out.
 7
     haven't received any notification or any responses from Mr.
 8
     Salvato claiming that he has received these letters. And I
 9
     have proof that I have sent these letters out.
10
               THE COURT: Okay. Have you been getting
11
     correspondence?
12
               MR. SALVATO: I have, Your Honor.
13
               THE COURT: Okay.
14
               MR. SALVATO: There are, obviously, some motions
15
     that I think have already been preserved, and there are some
16
     motions that could still be preserved or filed. I think
17
     that's a matter within my discretion as to how many and what
18
     types of motions should be filed, but I certainly have
```

listened very carefully and read everything from Mr. Mohamadi.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

THE COURT: Okay. All right. Well then, leave will be granted to file motions if you want to file separately--If Mr. Salvato tells you that he doesn't think there is any legal justification for filing a certain motion, and you want to file it--

THE DEFENDANT: I understand some of his concerns

```
9
 1
     are strategywise, and I understand that 100 percent. My only
 2
     concern are notices that are time barred. Those are my only
 3
     concerns. And that's where we have had a little bit of
 4
     communication problem. And I haven't had the opportunity to
 5
     really speak with him about it.
 6
               THE COURT: Okay. Well--
 7
               THE DEFENDANT: And outside of that issue, and this
 8
     issue with the grand jury also, I feel like there has been
 9
     perjured testimony presented in front of the grand jury.
10
     There is a lot of issues that I would like to address, and I
11
     feel like I haven't been given the opportunity to address.
12
               THE COURT: You are not going to get--
13
               THE DEFENDANT: I have proof that there has been
14
    perjurious testimony presented in front of the grand jury.
15
               THE COURT: What was presented to the grand jury
16
     isn't going to convict you of anything.
17
               THE DEFENDANT: I understand that, but they started
18
     this whole thing. And I am facing ten different incidents in
19
     one trial.
20
               THE COURT: I understand. I understand you have a
21
     right to cross-examine each of the witnesses the Government
22
     puts on the stand under oath. And if they have perjured
23
     themselves, that is going to come out.
24
```

To the extent the Government doesn't rely on witnesses because they are not, for whatever reason, the jury

isn't going to hear any testimony that you think is perjured testimony. The jury is going to get only the part of the case that comes into evidence in this courtroom. And you have got the right to cross-examine every one of those witnesses.

THE DEFENDANT: And I am very appreciative of your decision to move me, and that's very gracious of you. I am very appreciative of that.

I just, my main concern is this. And there is other issues too, I am kind of nervous, this is something new for me and I am under a lot of stress and pressure, but another main concern is I have a ton of evidence that I need to recover to present in my defense. And I don't feel like I have had the opportunity to really discuss these issues with Mr. Salvato because of my fear of exposing this stuff through the phone calls, through the mail.

And when he comes to visit me, I am in a room where there is an intercom. And I have had already issues with staff in the intercom room which I have written up where staff have addressed me as an informant, a snitch. And I wrote these issues up. And the Captain have dealt with this where they have went inside of my case and obtained certain information that I have discussed with Mr. Salvato.

So, I just don't feel comfortable under those conditions. I mean, there is a speaker that's on inside of the room when I talk to Mr. Salvato.

2

3

4

5

6

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

```
My mail is not going out. I can show you the log
where I haven't received any responses to those mails. And
some of the stuff that I have asked Mr. Salvato if he has
read, he hasn't. I have sent a lot of letters, I am sure some
have gotten to him. But there is a lot that haven't got to
him because when I addressed those issues, he just didn't have
it.
          So, there is a lot of evidence that I need to
recover, and I feel like, I don't understand how I am going to
be able to do that in three weeks.
          THE COURT: Okay. What's your schedule like the
rest of this week? Are you going, if I order that he remain
in Alexandria until the weekend, until Sunday or next Monday,
will you have an opportunity to meet with him?
          MR. SALVATO: Sure. I can see him tomorrow, which
is Wednesday. Thursday afternoon. I am relatively free this
week, Your Honor.
          THE COURT: All right. And what kind of conditions
are there, are you meeting with him? Are you able to have a
confidential conversation?
          MR. SALVATO: We do speak at Northern Neck. Sorry,
Mr. Linnell.
          I have been down to Northern Neck either eight or
nine times to see him. It is a two-and-a-half our trip down
there, plus our time there, and plus our return trip. But
```

```
during the time that I am there, he and I are alone in an
 1
 2
     interview room. There is an intercom that is available if one
 3
     were to listen to the conversation.
 4
               THE DEFENDANT: Other attorneys don't have it.
 5
     have their own room without an intercom when they speak.
 6
               MR. SALVATO: He is in a high security designation.
 7
     So, therefore, I have to meet with him in a special area.
 8
     facility has to be closed down for me to walk through the
 9
     hallway. It has to be closed down for him to walk through the
10
     hallway. And then we are in this back room where there is an
11
     intercom.
12
               THE DEFENDANT: They don't close the facility down,
13
     they just stop movement on the hallway.
14
               THE COURT: Right.
15
               THE DEFENDANT: When I was meeting Mr. Brehm, they
16
     let me meet him--
17
               THE COURT: Okay, hold on, let me finish with Mr.
18
     Salvato.
19
               Mr. Salvato, in Alexandria in the next several days,
20
     you have met with him, I am sure, on occasions in the
21
     Alexandria jail, is that suitable for having an
22
     attorney/client conversation?
23
               MR. SALVATO: It is.
24
               THE DEFENDANT: I would rather not--
25
               THE COURT: Stop, Mr. Mohamadi.
```

```
1
               THE DEFENDANT: I am sorry.
 2
               MR. SALVATO: It is, Your Honor, it is certainly
 3
    preferable over Northern Neck. Alexandria is very cautious in
 4
     terms of any observation of attorney/client meetings.
 5
               THE COURT: Okay. All right. Then I will keep you
 6
    here until next Monday. And I will order them to return you
     with three weeks to go before trial.
 8
               THE DEFENDANT: Your Honor, I have an issue with
 9
     that too.
10
               THE COURT: Yes, sir.
11
               THE DEFENDANT: One of the main people in this case
12
     is Mr. Bernham, who works as an investigator at the facility
13
     in Alexandria. And I have documents where I have been denied
14
     access to attorney there too.
15
               So, just to prevent any more, you know, complaints
16
     from me, I just wanted to bring that forward. And Mr. Salvato
17
     can witness he has tried to come see me when I was trying to
18
     hire him, and he was denied access. Is that correct? And
19
     that's happened on numerous occasions I have been denied.
20
               And I went through a lot of issues which I am going
21
     to present in trial with what went on in Alexandria also.
22
     I just wanted to bring that--
23
               THE COURT: Okay.
24
               THE DEFENDANT: I just don't feel comfortable--
25
               THE COURT: If Mr. Salvato has problems gaining
```

```
1
     access to you while you are in Alexandria, then he can pick up
 2
     the telephone and call chambers and we will correct that.
 3
               THE DEFENDANT: All right. Thank you, Your Honor, I
 4
     really appreciate it.
 5
               THE COURT: Okay. All right. Then let's leave--
 6
     Are you willing to continue to work with Mr. Salvato at this
 7
     time then?
 8
               THE DEFENDANT: I am not 100 percent sure, Your
 9
     Honor.
               THE COURT: Well, let's get through this weekend.
10
11
     This trial date, we are going to have a trial on February 16,
12
     the trial is going to start.
13
               THE DEFENDANT: Okay.
14
               THE COURT: And you haven't identified any reason
15
     why Mr. Salvato should not continue. And instead, this is a
16
    mechanical problem in your not having the access that you
17
     would like to have to your counsel. And as I have indicated,
18
     that's because of the charges against you and the risk to
19
     witnesses based on prior acts.
20
               THE DEFENDANT: Can I--
21
               THE COURT: So, let's get in a mindset where you are
22
     going to in the next several days identify further
23
     investigation you want done, any documents that you have in
24
     support of defenses, where those documents are located. And
25
     give Mr. Salvato all the information that you believe he needs
```

to continue to prepare your defense. And we are going to go from there.

THE DEFENDANT: Your Honor, I honestly would like to proceed pro se from this point forward. I just don't feel comfortable with all the stuff that is going on. It is going to be completely difficult for me try to do this in three to four weeks before trial.

And I have been dealing with it myself for the last three years that I have incarcerated now. And if it is possible, I would like Mr. Salvato to address these conditions hearings because he has prepared for it.

THE COURT: I am not going to relieve Mr. Salvato at this time. And, frankly, the motion isn't before me and noticed.

If you and Mr. Salvato after this weekend decide that you are going to move to proceed pro se, then he can file a motion on your behalf and we will have it heard after notice has been given.

THE DEFENDANT: Can I ask under what rule are these sanctions being applied to me, under what criminal rule? Like isn't there some type of code section that I am falling under?

THE COURT: These are conditions of confinement based on your threat to, potential threat to witnesses in the case. And those are administrative matters which the correctional facility is in charge of. I can modify them--

```
1
               THE DEFENDANT: The impression that I was under from
 2
     Mr. Nelson before he left, he told me that he was told by Mr.
 3
     Walutes to apply these sanctions on me. But in the
 4
     Government's motion, he stated that these sanctions were
 5
     applied to me under, because of the safety and security of the
 6
     institution. He didn't say that it was because of these
 7
     allegations. He basically said that it was because of
 8
     something I have done in the institution, but I haven't done
 9
     anything.
10
               And in comment to the stuff, the cases that he
11
     cited, which were cases where inmates tried to escape,
12
     assaulted staff, took the uniform--
13
               THE COURT: You are charged with recruiting fellow
14
     inmates to kill--
15
               THE DEFENDANT: But I am pleading not quilty.
16
               THE COURT: I know you have pled not guilty.
17
                               That's the allegation though.
               THE DEFENDANT:
18
               THE COURT: But that's--
19
               THE DEFENDANT: No one, I don't have a history of
20
     harming anyone. I have never harmed anyone. No witness has
21
     been harmed in this case. I mean, if that's the case, any
22
     inmate has that thought. I mean, if you put a microphone
23
     inside the jail, I am sure you would pick up about 100 federal
24
     cases that Mr. Walutes could prosecute.
25
               THE COURT: Well, you are not--
```

```
1
               THE DEFENDANT: I mean, I just don't how understand
 2
     that is the basis for these type of extreme conditions.
 3
               THE COURT: That is not before me, I am not going to
 4
     discuss it any more. I have told you, I have tried to
 5
     explain, you are not listening, you are just giving me a
 6
     speech now. You have been convicted of robbery, you have been
 7
     convicted--
 8
               THE DEFENDANT: I was 16 years old, Your Honor.
 9
               THE COURT: Those are crimes of violence, okay,
10
     whether you are 16 or 18 or 21.
11
               THE DEFENDANT: With a BB qun. So, I am basically
12
     getting prosecuted again for what I did when I was 16. That
13
     is all that is really happening.
14
               THE COURT: But an institution has a right to
15
     consider the potential danger that you face. They don't know
16
     you. All they know is your prior record and the charges
17
     against you. And that's enough for them to make decisions
18
     based on the conditions of your confinement while you are
19
     there for the safety of the correctional facility and its
     quards, and also considering potential witnesses who may be
20
21
     threatened.
22
               THE DEFENDANT: So, I am not afforded the First
23
     Amendment right of communication with my family or those
24
     rights that everyone else is afforded--
25
               THE COURT: Not when-- Well, you allegedly abused
```

```
1
     that.
 2
               THE DEFENDANT: That's what I am saying, allegedly.
 3
    Mr. Walutes has thrown everything at me except the kitchen
 4
     sink. What has my family done? My family doesn't even have
 5
     traffic tickets.
 6
               THE COURT: Okay. Now, it's not what--
 7
               THE DEFENDANT: To blame them for-- That's just
 8
     ridiculous. I would like to put him to his proof. He is just
 9
    basically saying anything. There is stuff that I would like
10
     to accuse him of without any proof. So--
11
               THE COURT: Listen, listen. Okay. You have made
12
    your--
13
               THE DEFENDANT: He doesn't have to prove what he is
14
     saying? All he has to do is say it and everyone one is going
15
     to believe it?
16
               THE COURT: That's not what is happening here and
17
     you know it. So--
18
               THE DEFENDANT: Sir, that's exactly-- My family
19
    hasn't done anything illegal, Your Honor.
20
               THE COURT: We are done with this conversation. We
21
    are done with this conversation. Okay.
22
               All right. Mr. Salvato is going to remain your
23
     counsel, you are going to work with him this weekend, during
24
     this week, and give him the information that you say--
25
               THE DEFENDANT: There is other conflicts of
```

```
19
 1
     interests --
 2
               THE COURT: Stop, stop.
 3
               THE DEFENDANT: -- I don't want to get into without
 4
     waiving my attorney/client privilege, Your Honor. That's the
 5
    main thing. I don't want--
 6
               THE COURT: And you can file it in a motion and put
 7
     it under seal if Mr. Salvato believes that it ought to be
 8
    under seal.
 9
               THE DEFENDANT: No--
10
               THE COURT: Stop, stop. Listen to me. Listen to
11
    me. You listen to me for a minute.
12
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
13
               THE COURT: I have listened to you for awhile.
14
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.
15
               THE COURT: All right. This is how we are going to
16
    proceed. And I am going to give Mr. Salvato an opportunity to
17
     speak further on other modifications.
18
               But at the very least, we are going to keep you here
19
     in Alexandria or in Fairfax if necessary --
20
               THE DEFENDANT: Please, Fairfax, I would really
21
     appreciate Fairfax.
22
               THE COURT: -- until Monday.
23
               THE DEFENDANT: If it is possible. I know I can't
24
    make any requests, I know--
25
               THE COURT: I will ask them for Fairfax if that's
```

20 1 possible. 2 THE DEFENDANT: Alexandria is actually a much better 3 facility where they give you everything, TV, cable, food. 4 Fairfax is a lot stricter, but the only thing, good thing 5 about Fairfax is they don't violate your rights when it 6 relates to attorneys and stuff like that, they follow the law 7 to the T, even though they are much stricter. 8 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Fairfax if it is 9 available. And if not, Alexandria. And that you shouldn't be returned earlier than Monday of next week. And that I will 10 11 have you brought back three weeks before trial to a Northern 12 Virginia facility. 13 And if there is problems with Mr. Salvato's access 14 to you, then he can call chambers and we will try and rectify 15 that right away. 16 THE DEFENDANT: Thank you, Your Honor. 17 THE COURT: All right. Have a seat for a minute. 18 Mr. Salvato, what other issues would you like to 19 address? 20 MR. SALVATO: The only other issue, practical issue, 21 I would like his family to be able to have one visit with him. 22 I think that would be helpful. I know they would love to 23 speak to the Court if they could today, but I can hear what 24 they are saying. Which is, they really want an opportunity to

speak with him about his future decisions about counsel and

- sort of the future direction of the case.
- 2 So, really, practically speaking, I appreciate
- 3 | Fairfax or Alexandria, either one is fine. I will go over
- 4 there and see him this week and review everything with him.
- 5 And then I think his family, if they could get one visit with
- 6 him to talk to him a little bit, I think that would be
- 7 helpful.

- 8 And then, obviously, Your Honor, he will make a
- 9 decision by Friday whether he does want to indeed proceed pro
- 10 | se or not. If he does decide that he wants to proceed pro se,
- 11 | I will file something. And then we will need to notice that
- 12 as quickly as possible.
- THE COURT: Okay. All right. Mr. Walutes, any
- 14 objection to--
- MR. WALUTES: Your Honor, the only request I have is
- 16 | that I would ask that Mr. Salvato as an officer of the court
- 17 be present when the family meets with him.
- I have no objection with Mr. Salvato being there and
- 19 | the family. I believe as an officer of the court that
- 20 eliminates my concerns.
- I don't want law enforcement to have to be present
- 22 and figure out what they are saying in a different language.
- 23 And, frankly, I want to stop investigating this case. And it
- 24 just keeps going.
- 25 And so, with the qualification that Mr. Salvato be

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

```
present when the family meets with him to talk about the
future direction of the defense, I have no objection, Your
Honor.
          THE COURT: All right.
          MR. SALVATO: That will be fine, Your Honor, I am
happy to do that. Alexandria may be a little bit more
accommodating, but if we want to try Fairfax first and then
Alexandria. But I have known the officers over at Alexandria
for 20-some years, and I think we could accommodate that. And
I am happy to be there while his family speaks to him.
          THE COURT: All right. I think that's an
appropriate accommodation. Although, as we are all aware, if
they are speaking a foreign language, Mr. Salvato is there as
an officer of the court, but not able to understand everything
that is being spoken.
          MR. WALUTES: I would hope then, Your Honor, that
somebody in the family would translate for Mr. Salvato.
          THE COURT: All right. Let's include Mr. Salvato in
the conversation.
          All right. Okay, I will get an order out. It's
seven more weeks. And your focus should be on assisting your
counsel in providing with you the best possible defense.
          And we have already talked about how I feel about
pro se representations, it is not in your best interest to
```